The
COMMONWEAL

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The Ship Strike

THE SHIP strike which tied up vessels carrying material to our Caribbean bases and engaged in Latin American and coastwise traffic shows a great complexity of forces at work. There were the shipping companies involved and the unions—Seafarers International, Sailors of the Pacific and, still on the sidelines but "embarrassed," the National Maritime. Then there was the Maritime Commission which, until the strike was certified to the National Defense Mediation Board, attempted to arbitrate a dispute to which, unfortunately, it was a party. Directly concerned there was the President himself.

The issue at stake centers on a demand for a war bonus for crews navigating in dangerous waters. There is no debate on the principle. The difficulty arises when it becomes necessary to state what waters are dangerous. Are the northern ports of South America dangerous? Is the Caribbean dangerous? In asking for a definition the unions are asking what many who are not sailors have been asking for some time and are touching upon a sensitive point of obvious political implications. The Maritime Commission wanted a blanket agreement between all shipping companies and all unions with the danger zones evaluated according to the indications given by current insurance tariffs. The unions demanded direct negotiation with the shipping companies and accused the Maritime Commission of preventing such negotiations. The Commission took over several ships and sent them out with crews selected "without regard to their union affiliations"—crews which the unions denounced as scab. The unions appealed to the President. The President said the ships must sail.

That, unless the Administration is to reverse its entire foreign policy, is quite evident. Just as planes must and undoubtedly will be built, just as national defense industries must and undoubtedly will function, the ships must and certainly will sail. There is nothing to discuss here unless it be the premise of national necessity. The point in which we are here interested is another. The unions must now face the fact that the government will oppose strikes. In what way and to what extent will it be possible to conciliate this necessity for production and transportation—which politically is now a constant—with, say, the Wagner Act? What freedom to bargain can be retained when strikes cannot be tolerated? In general terms must the labor movement, together with many civil liberties, go into eclipse in times of national emergency?

These questions are not raised with any polemical intent. It is obvious that the pressure of the emergency will tend to increase governmental control, management and perhaps ownership of industry and utilities. Will this trend be opposed or accepted or even stimulated by the unions?

Where Does Finland Fit?

THE QUESTION of whether Finland will pursue the war against Russia beyond the frontiers which Russia ruthlessly crossed in 1939 is now prominent in the papers. Reports indicate that there is a strong group in Finland, including, apparently, Baron Mannerheim and Minister Tanner, who believe Finland should go ahead and take Soviet Karelia and Aunus Provinces outside her pre-war boundaries. Finland, of course, must be pretty well tied up by Germany. England warns that if the Finns don't stop at their old borders, England will classify the Finns as belligerent enemies. Carrying the war further would certainly conflict with the line of policy taken in the recently published official blue-white book of Finland, "Finland Reveals Her Secret Documents on Soviet Policy."

This important source book quotes President Ryti: "The world must understand that Finland is fighting this war only against Russia; we are not parties in the big European struggle." Finland is said to be fighting defensively, for security. The thesis is that Russia started *both* Finnish wars. Unjustly attacking Finland in the first place, the Soviets refused to take seriously the dictated peace of March, 1940. Pushing Finland unbearably, adding insult after injury week by week

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through a fifteen month "ordeal by peace," Russia is accused finally of launching a general attack a few days after Germany started east. It is most doubtful if any contradiction is possible to the charge that Russia harassed and interfered with Finland wrongly and unbearably during the period between the wars. There must still be room for doubt about the opening of the second Finnish-Russian war until Finland discloses also the documents and story of her relations with Germany over the same period.

But what of the thesis that Finland is fighting a separate war? The chaos of these years is so great that every people engaged must feel that theirs is a special problem. There are so many levels of struggle—national, imperial, racial, economic, moral, cultural, social, religious—that the unity of the war is by no means apparent. (An Iranian Moslem must view it quite differently than the British Foreign Office or the Archbishop of Westminster does.) There must, however, be some important connection between all these wars and the various stages of belligerency engaging more and more of the world over the past decades. The connection is not Hitler, the German nazi, the leader of a gang and prophet of an ideology. That link would not hold together this war with the first World War, nor the Italian conquest of Ethiopia, the long fight between the Japanese and Chinese, nor even the practically simultaneous Finnish, Iranian, Iraq, Russian, English, European, Asiatic, African, American struggles. There is a trend of human thought and action, world-wide in scope, accented but not made by Hitler. Perhaps it is a climactic unwillingness to abide by established law. It is more than that: people are revolutionaries against the forms and laws of the recent past—capitalism, state sovereignty, a particular balance of power, etc., etc.—a dangerous condition for peace that could still be faced decently and creatively. But also, too many of us all over the world contemn natural law, the struggle for truth, and religious moral commandments. Groups break the law and are able to get by with lawbreaking—at least so far. The means of re-establishing honesty, law and justice and social authority have not been found or have not been applied. So far we are at the stage of fighting fire with fire; and the flames run on.

UAW Housing in Detroit

IT IS the world's troubles and man's crimes that make headlines; the law-abiding citizen and the comparatively smoothly functioning institution are not news. Judging by the papers the nation's labor unions would seem to be in a continual state of ferment, of strikes or threats of strike. We hear little of those industries where collective bargaining agreements are working well. But in certain industries today, and many more in the next few years when organization of employees has advanced beyond the primitive stage, there is the large question as to the union's rôle. Should there be unrelenting pressure to increase wages and cut down hours at the expiration of every contract? Possibly some labor leaders will think more in terms of sharing responsibility with management so that wages and hours will be arrived at on the basis of the good of all in the industry if not in the whole community. Once a full living wage has been achieved it would seem that the demand for more and more for less and less leads directly away from the industrial partnership idea to the heightening of class war. The fight for humanly decent wages and hours and working conditions was, and still is in many instances, the union's first job, but as just conditions in an industry become stabilized, the position of the union changes, much as it must continue to function to protect what it has achieved.

There are other effective means of achieving good living conditions besides wages and hours. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, for instance, an efficient organization scarcely more than a quarter-century old, has in operation today at various centers throughout the country a comprehensive educational, recreational and cultural program. Many of its locals have their own flourishing credit unions, insurance benefits, reading rooms. The union has its own bank and undertakes considerable legislative and political activity. So too the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, with its highly developed educational program, health centers, death and sick benefits, reading rooms, vacation resorts, "Pins and Needles." Back in 1927 the Amalgamated built two low-cost housing developments for over 800 families to demonstrate that workers with moderate wages did not need to live in city slums. And now the United Automobile, Aircraft and Agricultural Implement Workers organization has announced that it will assist its union locals in building groups of low-cost homes in defense production centers. The start is to be made in Detroit where tentative plans for 250 families have already been drawn up. New modern homes are to be erected within the city limits, and the monthly over-all charge of $30 will include taxes, water and insurance. These are instances of union maturity, possibly blueprints for the responsible unionism of the future.

Mexican Teachers Out of Politics

PRESIDENT Avila Camacho ordered the 35,000 Mexican federal school employees to abandon politics and to dedicate themselves exclusively to education. The 58,000 others, in the state and private school systems, are expected likewise to separate themselves from political and economic organizations in which Mexican

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teachers have been active. The teachers will leave their affiliation with the Confederation of Mexican Workers and the National Peasants Confederation. When it is recalled that the former organization (the C.T.M.) claims only 1,000,000 members, and is generally credited with a membership closer to 500,000, and that the teachers have been notable advocates and workers for the socialist Marxian aspects of the Mexican Revolution, it can be seen that this new move is important.

The problems of teachers and politics, of the relationship between teachers and the government and the ruling élite are many and tough, but in any case, for Mexico now, this separation looks like a happy development. The influence of the teachers was materialist, anti-religious, communist and totalitarian; the public school systems operated against the welfare of the Church and the people. The teaching profession appears an inappropriate branch of the ruling class. The confusion between teaching and exercising practical political power, particularly in the lower branches of the school system, certainly implies the opposite of a liberal or classical education. General social power and appropriate responsibility are hard to fuse in academic life. The greatness of teaching or of statesmanship are one or the other seriously endangered, and the experience desirable for both is hard to get at once. A tightly organized teaching body enmeshed in political activity can easily become a dangerous bureaucracy with all the temptations to selfishness, inefficiency, monopoly, etc. It can also easily become a racket in the general public life, spreading out over fields which should not necessarily be dominated by the schools (even, perhaps, certain educational fields), taking more than justifiable tribute from the public, exhibiting a corporate imperialism improper in the teaching as in any other occupation. In Mexico, a land where few people had education to equip them for public life and where a revolution had displaced old rulers, the organized political teachers, although they undoubtedly have done excellent work stirring up the Mexican social conscience, have still worked by means not proper to their profession, for basic social and spiritual ends which would be disastrous to any nation.

NCWC's New Home

FOR MANY YEARS the multiform and admirable activities of the National Catholic Welfare Conference have been housed in an ancient and dilapidated building in Washington. Over a year ago it was decided to remedy this situation. The new headquarters is now nearing completion. Obviously such a building needed in some way to figure forth the purpose of the activity it houses. It was decided to make its narrow and high façade serve principally as a foil for an heroic bronze figure of Christ the Light of the World. Naturally to obtain such a piece of sculpture is a delicate task. NCWC has decided upon a procedure which does it credit. The Liturgical Arts Society is to conduct a competition for the statue, along lines which reflect great professional integrity—an element all too often lacking in such ventures. Any sculptor in the US is eligible. From among the applicants, a limited number will be chosen to compete, their work being judged by a professional jury. Ten prizes will be awarded, including that for the winning design. Here is a rare occasion when every requirement of artistic competency has been called into play, to replace the all too frequent vagaries of individual taste.

Forum

FATHER COHALAN, in his article "Volunteer Pilots for Peter's Bark" (September 12), issues a challenge to the Catholic members of Fight for Freedom. I would be only too willing, otherwise, to let his remarks pass unanswered for the reason that he is so able a disciple of the red-herring school that it is difficult to answer him without taking up his statements one by one. There are, nevertheless, a few outstanding points that can be discussed briefly. First there is the blindness to the issues at stake which is implicit in almost every paragraph of the article and which is clearly expressed in many. Father Cohalan cannot or will not understand what is happening to our world. To him, this is just another war for markets and territories. He does not perceive the attack on the moral foundations of civilization. He apparently does not realize that nazism denies all those things which he himself stands for and that it has been destroying them everywhere it has had a chance. He would have us permit their destruction hoping, I presume, that it would stop short of America without any effort on our part.

There is something very strange in that view coming from a priest. It appears to me to mean that we must pray for peace but do nothing to bring it about. It overlooks the material aspects of the Church here on earth, and it takes no account of the fact that American Catholics are also American citizens with a duty to protect their country. But the fear of the moral argument which he expresses makes it still more puzzling. Father Cohalan wrote: "The moral argument is a dangerous one to invoke, for once the principle is established there is no escape from its conclusions, and compromise and selectivity in applying it are impossible." How true those words are. And what joy they must give to all appeasers when used as he uses them. Yes, the moral argument is dangerous. It always has been and it always will be—for those who do not want to follow it out. There are too many today who fear it for that reason. They dread admitting that a thing *should* be done for fear someone will suggest that they do it, and

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that might mean pain and sacrifice. So they are cautious, prudent. They want to avoid controversy even to the extent of avoiding the necessity of choosing between good and evil. The trouble is, in this case, that when Father Cohalan made his own great personal choice and became a priest he entered a field of controversy from which death alone can deliver him. There is nothing so controversial as religion—for it *is* the moral argument.

Further on Father Cohalan wrote: "The obligation to enter the war, which involves great suffering for our people and truly incalculable consequences for the rest of the world, is of so grave a nature that it can be accepted only on the unqualified pronouncement of the highest authority. The silence of that authority on this matter can be explained only in two ways. Either the obligation does not exist or the teaching authority of the Church is in default." The herrings crowd each other here. The "truly incalculable consequences for the rest of the world" exist truly enough but, as here stated, they are made to appear as bad consequences. Actually we are the ones who can save the world at the cost, yes, of suffering for ourselves. Shall we follow America First and weep over the possibility of suffering, or shall we accept it as an opportunity? But the fattest and reddest herring of all consists of the statement that the authority has been silent. It has not been silent. The Vatican has not told individual nations what to do, for that is not its function. But it has condemned totalitarianism in general and nazism in particular. It is up to the nations to do something about it. It is up to us as Americans to do what is necessary to save our country and our Church. No, the Catholics in the Fight for Freedom do not attempt to usurp the teaching power of the Church. But they are sick to death of priests who try to remain above controversy, to be prudent, while the world is burning under their feet and men the country over are wondering what has happened to the Catholic Church — wondering when the Father Cohalans will condemn the things the nazis do instead of pleading with us not to help Britain. There are times when such prudence can be evil. A man is either for the evil Hitler represents or against it.

Father Cohalan writes: "The interventionists are in the same plight [as the communist fellow travelers] for they must be ready to adjust themselves to policies determined by London." That does not happen to be true, a fact which he could have ascertained if he had taken the trouble to do so. The Fight for Freedom does not propagandize for Britain or any other country except the United States. We are anxious to save our own institutions, our own people, and, on the side, Father Cohalan's right to drag his red herrings across the printed page if he cares to. "Would the Fight for Freedom," writes Father Cohalan again, "have us fight all the active enemies of Christianity, or only those who menace Anglo-American political and economic interests?" The answer is simple. We should fight those who threaten our way of life and who have the military strength to implement their threat. That does not mean we should have fought Russia because of communism. The way to stop communism, at least until the time comes, if ever, when Moscow seeks to impose it on us by force of arms, is to make Christianity work. But the only way to stop the nazis now is to fight.

He writes also: "We are involved, as Catholics, in a disaster we cannot retrieve . . ." Here lies the substance of the futility of Father Cohalan's article. It is a form of moral defeatism which leaves us gasping. He would have Catholics stand aside and see our world collapse just because that world has not done things exactly as Catholics would like them done. That is not the way of brave men. Besides, are we so bad? Let me quote the Most Reverend Joseph P. Hurley:

"I am glad to have such a text upon which to base my protest against those publicists of the written and the spoken word who on every possible occasion insist upon telling us all how bad we are, how decadent, how unregenerate, how pagan; who din into our ears that our homes and our schools are utterly evil, our Government corrupt, our public morale depraved. I, as the Chaplains, do not believe that. We are not nearly as bad as some of these jaundiced fellows paint us. And I am beginning to suspect that some of these dyspeptic moralists are the dupes of a few men who have no interest whatever in morals, but who are seeking to discourage and divide us here in America. Evils there are in our land, and we should seek to remedy them. But let us not be unmindful of the warning of Shakespeare: 'But 'tis strange: and oftentimes to win us to our harm, the instruments of darkness tell us truths; win us with honest trifles, to betray us in deepest consequence.' No sin, I grant you, is a trifle, but our partial sins are scarcely to be compared with the totalitarian sin which has submerged Europe."

We should, and do, pray for peace. But we do not expect God to reverse the course of history without any effort on our part. We pray but we must also act. We are a part of the Church here on earth and we are citizens of the United States. Consequently we have a job to do. The Catholics who have joined Fight for Freedom believe in the American way. They are not blind to its errors or ignorant of existing antagonism to their Church. But they believe that America gives them the greatest opportunity that any nation offers. They love it and they want to take their part in saving it and improving it. What has Father Cohalan to offer which is better?

WILLIAM M. AGAR.

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The French Catholic Conscience

The effects upon French Catholics of the actions of the Pétain government.

***By* Herbert Morris**

AMONG the measures of repression recently instituted in unoccupied France is, we are told, the suppression of the Catholic weekly, *Temps Nouveau.* Evidently then, even in the judgment of the Vichy government, there must be Catholics among that opposition whose increasing force an angered Marshal Pétain admitted last August 12. On the second of June, speaking before an audience in greater part Catholic, at the Ecole de Chefs at Uriage, Admiral Darlan expressed anxiety over the attitude of the faithful: he said that he could understand Hitler's point of view on the clergy, took objection to any religious participation in politics, particularly in connection with the problem of Franco-German relations.

It is a fact that a full year after the armistice increasing numbers of French Catholics are going through a crisis of conscience, which tends to alienate them from the Vichy régime. Let us examine, for instance, what form this crisis has assumed for the directors of the Jeunesse Catholique. The psychological state of these young men is not without its importance, since their activities still involve, even today, the largest single group of organized youth.

The psychology of a young Catholic

At first glance a young Catholic, it seemed, could find nothing but good in the acts of the new régime. Last year Marshal Pétain dismissed any idea of a single State youth organization; he proclaimed that the diversity, the autonomy of the various youth movements would be guaranteed. Thus in principle was banished from French life that sort of conflict which, in Italy and in Germany, has set the Church against the State with regard to the Fascist or Hitler Youth. The general secretariat for youth, at the moment subsidiary to the Ministry of Public Instruction, has merely the task of *coordinating* youth organizations, while assuring them their separate individual existences. The Compagnons de France, created since the armistice, is not *the* official movement, but *one* movement among others. Collaboration has been established between government offices and the various Catholic youth movements; thus it is that the unemployment relief activities of young people are partly carried on by the JOC.

The closer they became, the more relations with Vichy and its representatives revealed to young Catholics difficulties which they had not at all foreseen. Their organizations became subject at once to a twofold leadership: on the one hand that of their own directors, whom they had themselves chosen with the approval of the Church; on the other hand that of the secretary and delegates of Vichy for youth, which ex officio have authority over all youth. Cross purposes and conflicts were inevitable. Disagreements could easily arise over fundamental questions: for example, over the very spirit of popular education. Faithful to a tradition which goes back to the first years of this century and which was renewed in 1927 with the foundation of the JOC, French Catholic youth seeks to make emerge a body of leadership within each social level. To be specific, it has confidence in the autonomous efforts of young workers to train, among themselves, a workers' élite. The Vichy government, on the other hand, wanted to mix up the various classes; it tended to entrust the education of young workers to representatives of the governing classes, obviously fearing that an independent organization of wage earners, such as is the JOC, would not have the "spirit of the national revolution." Moreover, it was decided that all leaders of youth should go through the official school of Uriage. Up to this time this school did not greatly upset the Catholics: the influence there dominant was that of the magazine *Esprit,* which has just been suspended because of its hostility toward the policy of collaboration with Germany. . . . What, in the future, will be the intellectual climate at Uriage? Confronting the personalist, pluralist conception of youth movements and of the French community which was defended by *Esprit,* there is another conception, which should be suspect to Christians. In *La Nouvelle Revue Francaise* a young writer, who doubtless would like to take upon himself the moral direction of youth, recently conjured up a "virile society of young people, emancipated by the life of the soldier, of the family and of the church." This is far indeed from the traditionalist eloquence of Marshal Pétain, and very close to the ideas of the nazis, who attentively observe the youth movements and who in the occupied zone have reduced Catholic youth to an existence of the Catacombs.

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Defense of French personality

In order to seduce young Catholics, who are deeply attached to the social teachings of the Church, the friends of the present régime endlessly repeated, "Family, Work, Fatherland—those will be our principles in power." Social speeches of Marshal Pétain, after the defeat of 1940, seemed to have the same general eloquence as those of the great Catholic orator, Albert de Mun, after 1870. Certain naive persons took consolation in the disaster by believing that they would find again in Vichy France the old France of 1871: *Gallia poenitens et devota* . . . (France penitent and loyal). And in 1940 there was no longer anything to fear from the republicans of the National Assembly. . . . We could by authority build up a Christian order. . . . while Hitler indifferently stood by. However silly this may seem, when seen from the distance of the United States, this dream was seriously cherished by people of a certain position and not without influence.

While these notions were going ahead under full steam, genuine descendants of Albert de Mun felt the necessity of defining a social policy which would be worthy of France—even if there were only a conquered France to work in. Leaders of the French Catholic workers movement joined on November 15, 1940, with non-Catholic trade unionists to assert without possibility of misunderstanding the essential position of French trade unionism. This manifesto was published by the bulletin of the Fabian Society, *France and Britain*. Here are a few sentences from it: "Trade unionism has been and still is founded on the principles of liberty: it is false to assert today that the defeat of our country sprang from the exercise of liberty by our citizens, whereas the incompetence of our general staff, the weakness of our government bureaus, and industrial half-heartedness are its internal causes." And further on: "In no case and for no reason and under no form can French trade unionism admit distinctions between persons founded on race, religion, birth, opinion, money. . . . French syndicalism specifically cannot admit anti-Semitism. . . ." In its conclusion again we read: "We must not despair of the future of France. We must not consider ourselves, through a chance military defeat, as an inferior nation or people" . . . we must not "have the psychology of the conquered." In such a state of mind the leaders of the French Catholic workers movement adhered to the solemn declaration of French trade unionism: "Workers cannot recognize as truly working class such organizations as have not chiefs freely chosen by the workers or such as carry on their activities under the guardianship of the State." This was a considered opposition to all Fascist corporatism. Vichy had not led the Catholic workers astray, and they remain faithful to the cause of liberty.

By associating themselves with a manifesto of French trade unionism, Catholic trade unionists have shown that they have understood the great danger which lay in defeat: an intellectual and moral weakening, a rejection of the past which would lay the country open to nazi infection. This problem of psychological resistance has been patent to a large number of young Catholics; no more than the trade unionists are they willing to forswear the essential need for democracy, nor the "personalist" conception in which, for them, both the Christian and the French traditions had culminated. Without saying so openly, they opposed all those who attempted to *make* France over on a nazi model. *Temps Nouveau* had set up the watchword, *Rediscover France*. But this defense of the Christian spirit and of the French spirit is in itself a purely spiritual resistance. It was possible to believe, and many did believe, that it had nothing in common with political opposition to the Vichy régime: and this belief was not without validity after the 13th of December, when Pétain drove out Laval. Indeed many thought that the Marshal, as much as he could limiting collaboration with Germany, was one at heart with those who, in their souls, resisted nazism.

The policy of collaboration

Eight months have gone by; things appear in an altogether different light. Marshal Pétain has once more taken up a policy of collaboration; he has confirmed, against public opinion, and enormously increased the powers of Admiral Darlan, and has changed his fatherly admonitions into threats and commands: this altered language, which has been noticeable for some three months, is an indication of the seriousness of the crisis.

The development of the policy of collaboration troubled the consciences of Catholics sufficiently well informed. If one is to accept the ideas expressed by Admiral Darlan at Uriage, what should be done is to help nazi Germany to win the war quickly. At once the question becomes immediate and practical: has one the right to collaborate in the nazification of Europe? That is the problem for consciences. Those who have once seen the problem can *submit* to the policy of Vichy; they cannot *accept* it.

It is this independence of judgment, which in an authoritarian régime requires an almost heroic alertness of the will, which the Vichy authorities feel, and it is by this that they are angered. Their "national revolution" seeks to obtain from Frenchmen the same complete allegiance which the fascist and nazi revolutions have required of Italians and Germans. Yet more and more this so-called *national revolution* seems to be one with *collaboration*, seems to consist in the integration of France in Hitler's new order. The further it reaches, the more positive it becomes, the less can Vichy's policy tolerate any will toward independ-

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ence, even a purely spiritual independence, or any resistance to the nazi capture of the French spirit and the Christian spirit. Will those, then, who up until now have merely resisted spiritually, fight politically?

Many Catholics are gravely troubled. For one thing, by its authority in fact on French territory, the Vichy government would seem to be the established government; for another thing, even if, after the Montoire meeting, Marshal Pétain declared himself solely responsible before history, still in matters so grave as the subjection of France, the nazification of Europe, each man's responsibility is inalienable. If Frenchmen, if Christians, judge clearly and loyally the policy of Vichy to be a fatal policy, how will they be able to give it their support?

Those who are inclined to become opponents say that Marshal Pétain's government is "undoubtedly the *established* government, but certainly not the *sovereign* government." Is it not enough to point out that before becoming effective over Frenchmen every law, every decree must be submitted to the German armistice commission at Weisbaden? Juridically linked to that of the occupation authorities, the moral authority of Vichy is singularly weakened: who would dare assert that decisions of German generals oblige conquered Frenchmen *in conscience?* Here is why we can see certain worried minds emerging from a conformist mass which still would entrust its security to the cult of Marshal Pétain—minds who feel obligated to make decisions for themselves.

A certain number of these—no one knows how many, no one knows their names—have already, months ago, made their decisions. I do not mean only those who have joined General DeGaulle: the free French forces are not made up entirely of Jews and Free Masons; Catholics and even men of the Right are numerous enough there, and even hold posts of authority. I am thinking rather of Frenchmen who have remained in France, who saw from the start that the armistice must include "collaboration." Here is how one of these groups opposing Vichy judges the actions of the Vichy government: "They have been willing in that part of the country which was scornfully left in their hands to serve as a camouflage for German influence . . . they know that German defeat will mean the end of them . . . that is why, in spite of all the hatreds by which they are divided, they are all firmly convinced of the necessity of maintaining German domination. To count on them for resistance is to believe in a fairytale. . . . It is not under such men that France will become France again. We cannot defeat Germany without at the same time destroying Germany's tools." When it published this statement in its French edition, *The Sword of the Spirit* pointed out that it was a Catholic who brought it to London, and that indicates how deep is the present crisis in the French conscience.

Megalopolis Helps Main Street

What city folk need is consumer education.

***By* John LaFarge, S.J.**

INTO the mental file of "Unfinished Conversations" I dropped last week what I was just going to say to the Doctor about apples, when we had to part company on the station platform and end our conversation on the use of local farm products.

To the Doctor, who is an eminent physician—particularly eminent in such matters as diet and digestion—I was expounding this idea. Being thoroughly a city doctor he had been extolling the beauties of country life, which he genuinely loves, with the usual conclusion that there is not much you can do about it. "Doctor," I said, "if country people were allowed to raise the food products—fruit, vegetables, etc.—which can be raised in any particular vicinity, and were allowed to market them to the cities in that vicinity, how much simpler would the whole farm problem be." I explained to him, then, how much of our supposed cost of food production goes into elaborate business organization: high-powered, long-distance marketing; expensive advertising; distribution over length or breadth of half or the entire continent, and other overheads.

Wisely or unwisely, I mentioned apples; for apples are a staple product in New York State. This gave the Doctor his cue: "After all," he said, "people wish for certain qualities in apples, which cannot be supplied locally. . . ." Just then the whistle blew, and we were separated before I could come to what was really the heart of our conversation.

But this has given me my cue also. "People," that is to say city people, "wish for certain quali-

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ties." And these particular qualities can be supplied only from a great distance. How simple this sounds; yet a very complex problem is contained in these few words. What are these qualities? Are they the qualities of a *good* apple? Delicious flavor; mealy consistency; absence of blemish, agreeable combination of sweet and sour—or no sour at all, just to suit your taste? All these can be supplied by the orchards near by. But the *perfection* of all these: increased size, the last word in flavor or such? Perhaps not. "But the public wants just that." Evidently it does, or has been induced to want it by intensive advertising. But must the public necessarily have just the thing it wants? Or can a city public be educated back to be content with just a little bit *less* than everything it wants; educated back to be content with home-grown qualities; with apples or pears a trifle smaller or less luscious in appearance than those imported from thousands of miles away? And the same for eggs or vegetables or anything else in the line of possible local products, leaving the national market free for exotics?

To put the matter bluntly. Our State and Federal Governments have expended millions upon educating producers as to what to grow and how to grow it. But are we to ignore the question today of educating consumers as to what they may eat—or otherwise make use of—in such manner as to aid either their own health or the national agrarian economy or in many instances both at once?

To one whose mind and heart are in the country but whose feet are on the sidewalk, now seems to be remarkably well the time to come to some sort of decision as to whether this process should be begun; and if it is, here is a very direct and positive way in which the large city can help the countryside, for the large city is our principal consumer and in great measure a completely uneducated one.

Now is the time, for the days of haphazard consumption are apt to follow the fate of the days of haphazard production.

Coffee!

Two women had just landed here, a few days ago, from the transatlantic clipper. That very afternoon they attended a meeting where the question of European food relief was being discussed. One of these ladies was a ruddy-faced, whole-souled, unpretentious farmer's wife; the other, a wealthy and fastidious "society matron." They had little in common in the way of temperament or interests. Buffet refreshments were served; the waiter asked, in routine fashion: "You will have coffee?" The two women's eyes met; in wonder, almost in fear. The same unspoken thought passed through their minds. They had both been in the occupied countries. "To be *asked to have* coffiee; to be *given* coffee? Was this reality, or was it dreamland? And did the other men and women who were seated around them realize how fantastic the waiter's words sounded?"

But nothing like that can ever happen here! Let us hope we never see ration cards for food or gasoline or clothing material, or for tobacco and other "luxuries." But the surest way to prevent ration cards is to educate great masses of city consumers into the uses of food that can be grown abundantly, which does not depend upon expensive overhead for distribution; which, indeed, with a little aid, the consumer may even learn to grow or to process himself.

So here is one way in which Megalopolis can help Main Street; and there is another.

Kin to consumer education is consumer organization, principally by means of cooperatives; which, of course, will be greatly benefited and placed within the bounds of practicability if the job of supply is brought within a rational and negotiable range by the process of consumer education.

Many who do not live in Brooklyn have followed with much interest the progress and experiences of the cooperative store initiated and carried to success by the Reverend Thomas I. Conerty in Holy Rosary Parish in that city. Its origin is described in the *Interracial Review* for June, 1940. The significance of that venture lies not in size or novelty or any other startling features, but in the simple fact that it has had to contend with the most definitely urban of urban obstacles. It is in the heart of a huge city; the population is racially mixed; the people for great part are strangers to one another, with little natural local or community bond; and there is tremendous competition with large, high-powered groceries on every side. Repeatedly it looked as if the store would need to fold up. But, on the contrary, it unfolded, and now, as a General Motors executive said to me once about the old Model-T Ford: "The thing *does work.*"

What was the secret? Elaborate selling to Brooklynites of the cooperative idea? No; the secret was thorough and persistent adult education; and plain religion, consistently applied.

Such an individual cooperative, in the heart of a large city, can, it is true, do little to aid the rural situation. But if the urban cooperatives multiply, and if their direction is in the hands of men who have some knowledge of rural conditions and some interest in the lot of rural producers, it is evident then that the rural producer has something tangible to deal with. Communication can be set up between city and country groups, mutual explorations can be made as to preferences, seasons and abilities, and a genuine collaboration established which, as Father Nell has so often explained, can ripen into a bona fide type of vocational or occupational group embracing city and country in one bond of common interest.

All prosperous, healthy rural life must neces-

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sarily rest upon the solid foundation of independent, widely distributed ownership of the land with its corollary, an unimpeded command of the means of utilizing the land. As things are now fixed in a great part of our rural communities such independent ownership is hard to obtain, often impossible to retain, without the aid of the city landlord, the city real-estate agent and the city financier. In like measure, rural, independent ownership is greatly facilitated by interest shown in it and even a very moderate aid extended toward it by these elements in city life. This consideration becomes all the more urgent at the present time when huge slices of city manhood, in the form of defense industries and military camps, are dumped down into the hearts of formerly isolated country districts; for they bring with them far-reaching local social changes.

The city and rural problems

Interest and aid! But city interest of all things is most difficult to arouse in the problems of rural ownership and, in general, in the real problems of rural life. People are difficult enough to educate in social problems which affect them immediately and personally. How much more when the connection, though profound and basic, eludes their senses and their experience!

For the city man, questions of rural economy are "academic"; but if any social problems are to find a reasonable and a Catholic solution, there must needs be plenty of "academic" instruction. Things must be discussed, principles laid down, facts alleged, which do not immediately affect the person who studies them.

Much of the academic atmosphere of these instructions and discussions would be removed if city people were encouraged and enabled to form first-hand contacts with the country on their tours and vacations. Toward this end some highly profitable advertising might be done. How many city dwellers ever receive an invitation to attend rural or farmers' meetings—whether of men or women, where serious problems are discussed? Yet there are many intelligent men and women, young and old, in any great city who might be keenly interested if they could sit in upon the workings of a rural cooperative or Grange or demonstration.

Social studies in the colleges offer an opportunity to bring rural values before city audiences, social-action groups and forums; indeed, all occasions when the national economy is discussed. Any well rounded spiritual program will include this topic; for it is the spiritual approach and the formation of spiritual attitudes toward such material matters as food production and consumption, the family and the land, etc., which will be the surest foundation of constructive rural-urban relations.

The Rôle of the Samurai

By CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS

I DO NOT pretend to any special expertness in Japanese history, but I seem to have read that at the time of the wakening of the country in the last century the Japanese aristocracy made a voluntary surrender of their privileges because they thought that the time had come when those privileges were no longer for the national benefit. Whether the Japanese aristocracy ever did this or not, I am not greatly concerned, but certainly our best hope today is that such an example, whether historical or mythical, should be followed by aristocracies and imperialistic nations in the modern world. We are all more or less familiar with the Marxian thesis by which exploiting classes hang on to their wealth and their privileges as long as possible and then eventually have them taken from them by the revolt of the exploited. And on the Marxian theory of economic determinism, which is a pompous way of saying that everybody is unlimitedly greedy, there is obviously nothing that the rich can be expected to do with their riches except hang on to them as long as possible. But we Christians, who believe in human freedom, while we admit the strength of the motive of avarice, will not admit that that motive is compulsive. We will not admit that it is absolutely impossible for a rich man to sell all that he has and give it to the poor, nor even (obviously by means of a somewhat more complicated technique) for a whole rich class thus to surrender its riches, and more and more it is becoming clear that it is along that line alone that there is a hope of solution for our modern problems.

We are all familiar with the odious dilemma, so long as we will not break with the assumption of the necessity of greed. On the one hand there is confiscatory legislation, which is very probably in defiance of Catholic teaching and which certainly carries with it the worst of social consequences and may well, by alienating the good will of an important section of the community, have the result of disrupting the whole economic machinery. On the other hand, if we preach the sacredness of the rights of property, then the rich merely exploit that doctrine in order to keep themselves in possession of their ill-gotten riches.

But in truth things are not quite as hopeless as all that. It may be that there have been other societies — pre-revolution France, pre-revolution Russia — where things were hopeless, though as a matter of fact there were considerable reforms in the years before revolution in both of those countries. But both in England and America in

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the last years it is rather remarkable how much money the rich have lost and, by comparison with what the Marxians taught us to expect of them, how little fuss they have made about it. Do not misunderstand me. I am not preaching any strange new doctrine of the immaculate sanctity of the rich. If you say that the rich have not upset the apple-cart only because, much as they disliked losing money, they had the sense to see that they would lose even more if they threw everything into chaos, I agree that there is a good deal in your contention. But prudence is after all a great virtue, and what could be a rarer and more blessed possession for a nation than a class of rich men who possess a certain amount of common sense? Let us indeed be thankful for such a special mercy. If again you say that the rich only did not upset the apple-cart because they were not strong enough to do so, I answer that you are telling a half-truth. There were indeed some rich who would have been willing to upset the apple-cart and those rich were perhaps not strong enough to do so. But they were only not strong enough because there were others who would not cooperate with them. If all the rich had acted together they might not have been able to preserve their own riches, but they would at any rate have been able to prevent anybody else from getting them. As Lord Balfour truly said, "Bolshevism is a very good way of making the rich poor, but it has as yet to be proved that it is as effective in making the poor rich."

We are sometimes told that it is the English rich who made this war solely out of concern for their dividends, or again that it is the American capitalist who is prolonging the war because of the profits that he thinks that he will make out of it. There are indeed plenty of very stupid rich men in the world, but I cannot believe that there is any rich man so stupid that he imagines that he is going to be more comfortably off as a result of this war. The truth is obviously exactly the opposite. The truth is obviously that the capitalist and financial interests were, as was but reasonable from the point of view of their selfish interests, willing to go to enormous lengths of concession to avoid a war. Perhaps they were willing to go too far. I do not want to argue that point here, but in any event when the war came it is quite extraordinary how little fuss they made about taxation which would have seemed lunatic confiscation to any previous generation.

One knows of course the question that the rich inevitably raise at such a time as this. Are we to lose our riches, they say, in order to usher in some new rule of equality, or will others make themselves rich and rule the land in our place? And, if the land is but to change masters, will it be any better for the change? They are piqued, and often justly piqued, at some of the crude accusations which their enemies level against them. It simply is not true, they say, that they have had no notion in their heads save that of exploiting their fellow-men. On the contrary, as the best of them can claim, they have always looked on their wealth as a trust and tried to do with it as much good as possible. There are plenty of people who say that they would not mind losing their money, but what they cannot stand is being lied about.

There is indeed no answer to all this save the answer of the samurai. It is indeed by no means impossible that a new plutocracy, or at least a new oligarchy, will substitute itself for the old and that the substitution will be by no means for the better. One cannot but notice that most of the most virulent complaints against privilege and inequality today in England come not from ordinary men and women but from such persons as successful writers—men who live a highly special and privileged life very different from that of the man-in-the-street. Yet whether it be for better or for worse that the rich should lose their money, it is obviously inevitable, and it is therefore the test of their virtue that they should not make too much fuss about it, nor allow their complaints to stand in the way of the more important task of the rebuilding of society. I do not mean merely their unjust complaints. I mean also their just complaints. That is the test of character, when a man can refrain from the airing of just grievances.

All this, which would doubtless have been true enough anyway, has been made ten times more true by Russia becoming involved in the war. Before these lines are in print readers will be acquainted with the further development of the situation, but there is no doubt about it that Russian belligerency and her early successes have aroused a very new spirit in England. People have short memories. If the Russians should succeed in being the first people to stop Hitler, then we can be sure that the cry will be raised, as indeed it is being raised already, that it was merely capitalist malice which pretended that there were defects and inefficiencies in the Russian scheme and that the experiments which have answered there so gloriously must be tried out also over here. Now there are, of course, many aspects of communism with which it is simply impossible for us as Catholics to compromise, but, if under these circumstances we fight communism because it is atheist, our difficulty will be to persuade people that we are fighting it for that reason. So long as we have money, they will inevitably believe that the real reason why we are fighting it is that it threatens our money. That being so the only possible way to disarm suspicion, the only way to meet the challenge with the hope of success is that those of us who have money should first divest themselves of it. We can divest ourselves without illusion or the pretense of illusion. We can say: "I really do not know if you will be any better off

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if I give up my money," but at the same time we must say: "If you really think that it is my money that I care about above all other things, then I do give it up to show you that it is not." There are grave disadvantages in the taking of money from the rich by the poor or the state. The difficulties if the rich choose to give up their money are less.

Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

HAVING published in this column a memorandum written by critics of the Irish censorship, I have received from the Dublin government the following reply:

"The article in THE COMMONWEAL (August 22) by Michael Williams is completely misinformed. No sort of propaganda for or against either belligerent is permitted in Ireland. The public statements of the leaders of the various belligerents and neutral states and all official communiqués are published in full. The Irish people are thus kept fully informed of the facts and the policies involved in the war. It is ridiculous to state that information is weighted in favor of Germany. On the contrary, practically all war news comes via London from Reuters, the Press Association, the United Press, the Associated Press.

"The governing principle of the censorship is to prevent Ireland being made a cockpit by the rival war propagandists. No press cable reaches Ireland from any part of the world except through Britain, and that fact alone refutes the accusation. It is interesting to note that no news has come to Ireland through the press agencies of statements of Cardinal O'Connell and other members of the Catholic hierarchy, of Lindbergh, Senator Wheeler or Governor Landon.

"The account of one broadcast by Cardinal Hinsley was stopped in the press. It had been put on the air by the British Broadcasting Corporation, and the British press described it as having aroused great anger in Germany and of being anti-Mussolini. Cardinal Hinsley is only one of the cardinals of several nationalities of the Sacred College whose propaganda statements have not been given publicity in Ireland. The propagandist book published by Burns and Oates and distributed by the British Ministry of Information was not allowed dissemination. The illustrations consisted of examples of Continental blasphemy characteristic of French, Belgian and German anti-Catholicism since the eighties. The book would not be allowed in Ireland in peace or war. No complaint of discrepancy has ever been received from the Vatican representative in Ireland. The facts of the five false rumors are as follows: The rumors were started by the Protestant Bishop of Chelmsford, Dr. Henry Wilson, at the Chelmsford Diocesan Conference on October 8, 1940. His Lordship said, 'One of the most melancholy aspects of the European situation was the abject failure of the Pope to give spiritual guidance to the people who looked to him for spiritual leadership. The fact is that the Papacy is now as was the case in the last war and indeed always has been in the last 400 years anti-British and anti-democratic.' The Irish censorship had prohibited publication of this statement, which had been repeated by the Germans, and when the Vatican denial was published, the Irish did not give the rumors fresh publicity by publishing the denials.

"Fair journalism requires that when Senator MacDermott, Senator Fitzgerald and Deputy Dillon, who are strongly opposed to the Government, are quoted, the official replies of the Government should also be quoted.

"The following quotation from the July 19, 1941, issue of the Dublin weekly review, *The Leader,* which is frequently critical of the Government, gives the general views of the censorship: 'Though many people have been annoyed by the censorship, a development which was inevitable since a censorship is essentially an irritating thing to come up against, we do not think there is anyone in the country who has given consideration to the matter who does not believe that the censor is absolutely impartial and concerned only with the public interest. Certainly no one is being left in the dark about the issues involved in the war. We talk to large numbers of people of all classes and we find amongst them a better informed and more balanced view about the whole matter than could possibly prevail if the public were swamped from week-end to week-end with relayed propaganda and raucous arguments.'

"The Irish attitude on the Christian aspects of the war was recently stated as follows in the Dail by Deputy William Cosgrave, the leader of the Opposition: 'In the present issue, to my mind, all the virtues are not on one side and all the sins and the guilt on the other. We are not bound to take part in a conflict of this kind. It is no part of the Christian religion or the Catholic faith to insist upon our taking part in it. On the larger question and the more important question upon which side in this war there is the larger number of Christians, it is not for us to speak. It is the fact that a very great number of Christians are on both sides, and a very great number of Catholics also. It is not part of the Catholic teaching or of the Catholic religion, so far as I know, that majorities decide whether things are right or wrong in time of war. It is not the ten commandments that the belligerents are thinking of. They have never governed the history of Europe for the last three or four hundred years and, consequently, it is not the question of right or wrong which prompts or agitates the minds of belligerents. I have yet to learn from any source that the guiding principle in connection with the winning of the war is the true Christian principle.' "

I shall reserve comment on this statement of the official point of view of the Irish government to a later occasion.

Communications

THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

Pawtucket, R. I.

TO the Editors: May I enter a small protest against the scathing and uncharitable letter of Mr. Sylvester in your issue of September 12, 1941? The work of Bernanos, Kate O'Brien, Graham Greene and others is

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for the educated. Say what you will, these men do not appeal to the average high school graduate. In fact, they have a limited public even among college graduates.

A book such as "The Keys of the Kingdom" will appeal to the general public because it reduces big problems into a language that can be understood. Thus the reader is able to grasp something of the problem. I know that such simplicity has its limitations but, Mr. Sylvester, it also has the quality of at least partly solving these problems. To characterize the book as "one vast stinkerola" indicates a loss of intellectual judgment. Mr. Sylvester's emotions certainly ran riot.

Give Dr. Cronin more time in the Church before condemning him completely. We who are born in the Church oftentimes become downright smug, and worse, blind to the trials and difficulties of those who are new in the Church.

Mr. Sylvester's ending was woefully weak. He says, "A badly written book is a badly written book no matter if it converts millions." After all, Mr. Sylvester, if a badly written book converts one person then it was worth the writing. And I don't think that Our Lord would be too particular about form.

ALBERT J. MCALOON.

P. S. From "Art and Scholasticism" to *PM* is quite a jump, Mr. Sylvester.

Bronxville, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Perhaps one reason for the popularity of the new Cronin book among Protestants—and among some Catholics too—is that there is throughout a sense of flouting authority as represented by the Church. Of course it is unpleasant authoritativeness and rouses the reader to say "Good for you" when Father Chisholm scores one of his feats of super-humility. But the very thing that annoys a Protestant most about the Church—its to him unbending authoritative attitude—is the reason why this book can do harm. Father Chisholm really achieves most of the good he does on his own. His superiors just get in his way. He raises his own money, mostly among the pagans, and no one of the cloth seems to understand him at all save one bishop.

To write a long novel in which there are various clergy and only one large-minded, understanding priest seems to me to show the Church in an unbalanced light. And Father Chisholm seems even to a mind untrained in theology, like mine, to interpret the Scriptures to his own way of thinking sometimes.

When he wrote little notes on kites, the contents reminded me of a rebellious Shelley sending his paper boats down the river.

I read the story with interest, and did not feel it was as powerful in its telling as it seemed to Mr. Cort, nor as cheap as it seemed to Mr. Sylvester. But after I finished it and thought back over the unpleasant clergy in it I was happy to remember a lot of priests of various ranks whom I know (or know of) who hold authority in one hand and humility in the other and don't drop either one—or throw either one at people, either.

KATHERINE BURTON.

ERIC GILL'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: I enjoyed Jean Charlot's review of Eric Gill's "Autobiography" in the September 12 issue of THE COMMONWEAL because it does strike a balance and places the many problems involved in Gill's work and outlook on life in a proper perspective, although Charlot sometimes allows a few of his pet peeves to lessen the efficacy of his criticism. It may seem that I am picking on a small matter when I suggest that Charlot's last sentence in this review may be amplified or, at least, amended. I refer to this statement: "Of the liturgical art movement that Gill leavened it may be similarly said: They rejoice at having replaced in their churches the neo-gothic style by the pseudo-byzantine." There is some truth in this remark, and yet it should be noted that those who have exchanged one *ism* for another cannot be said to be the backbone of the liturgical art movement. Any attempt to effect some improvement in a line of endeavor will always attract flocks of ambiguous camp followers, but such excess baggage does not necessarily invalidate the movement itself. The liturgical art movement is not just another *ism* nor is it merely a recall to any pseudo-style; it is a corrective and a desire to return to sanity in matters connected with the arts at the service of the Church. Unless I am very much mistaken I feel that Mr. Charlot will agree to this distinction. And by the way, the liturgical art movement in the United States would be greatly helped and fostered if Mr. Charlot's own particular talent as a painter were used by the clergy and their architects.

MAURICE LAVANOUX,
Secretary, Liturgical Arts Society, Inc.

MEN OF THE AXIS ARMIES

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: In the last issue of THE COMMONWEAL (September 12) there is an article, "Men of the Axis Armies," by Mr. J. Paar-Cabrera, whose general information and reasoning I do not discuss.

Only one point seems to me to need contradiction, as it is not exact and gives a wrong impression of an Italian historical period, easily and frequently distorted *pro domo sua* by fascist propaganda.

Mr. Paar-Cabrera writes: *"Because it must not be forgotten that in 1920 Italy nearly went communist. . . ."* Impartial witnesses of that period in Italy can prove that the workers' agitation there was never more menacing than the contemporary French and British strikes, and the American labor conflicts on many occasions, up to 1941. At any rate, it is certain that all Italian troubles never reached the disastrous extent and gravity of the English general strike of 1926. Acknowledging these facts, no one dreams of affirming that France, England, America "were nearly going communist." That is a privilege of Italy, notwithstanding that even Mussolini in 1920 wrote that the communist danger there was only imaginary.

On the subject I have the pleasure of reminding you that THE COMMONWEAL has the good fortune of counting among its highest contributors Don Luigi Sturzo—

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former chief of the Italian Catholic Popular Party—whose book ("Italy and Fascismo," New York, 1927, published also in Paris, Berlin and Madrid) gives plentiful and decisive evidence of the nonexistence of a real and serious Bolshevik peril in Italy, either in 1919-20 or later.

Besides, when Mussolini made his "coup d'état" in 1922, even normal labor agitation had ceased: only fascist violence was rampant, facilitated by the blind complicity of civil and military authorities.

ALBERTO TARCHIANI,
General Secretary, Mazzini Society.

HOME LIBRARY

Los Angeles, Cal.

TO the Editors: In the May 16 issue of THE COMMONWEAL there appeared an article entitled "Home Library" by Edward Skillin, Jr., which dealt specifically with the St. Thomas More Library of Los Angeles.

Several communications have come to us because of that article, and as I believe they may be of interest to you I am going to enumerate them.

On the very day that the said issue reached Los Angeles a lady and her daughter appeared at the library for the first time. They lived close by and knew of its existence. In fact they had intended patronizing it, but had never been moved to do so until they read about it in THE COMMONWEAL. Since that time the daughter has returned at frequent intervals, and as she is an omnivorous reader our circulation has increased perceptibly. Moreover she has offered to assist us whenever we may need help.

You may be amused to know that the article also served as a sort of "Lost and Found" column inasmuch as someone we had not heard of for years learned of our presence in Los Angeles through reading it. She was not aware that there was such a thing as a Catholic library here. The consequence is that a very pleasant friendship has been renewed and we have acquired a constant reader.

We have had letters from friends in various parts of the country telling us of their pleasure in reading of the work done here. These letters came from Winthrop, Weston and Boston, Massachusetts; from New York City; from Indiana and Texas; from San Francisco and finally from the interior of China! Thus has the St. Thomas More Library been publicized through the pages of THE COMMONWEAL.

JULIA T. METCALF.

The Stage & Screen

Cuckoos on the Hearth

"ARSENIC AND OLD LACE" having proved the appeal of murder as comedy, it was to be expected that the muse of laughter would be summoned again to preside over dark doings in the theatre. Producers love to play the game of follow the leader; exactly why no one knows, one sort of success rarely being immediately repeated. And yet the two plays given last week may have a moderate appeal, for they are rather above the average of follow-up plays. Indeed Parker W. Fennelly's "Cuckoos on the Hearth" has considerable originality, as well as one very amusing characterization. Mr. Fennelly's play, produced at the Morosco Theatre by Brock Pemberton, has to do with a lonely country home in Maine, at which arrive during a snowstorm a gentleman considerably more like Mr. Alexander Woollcott than was the Mr. Whiteside of "The Man Who Came to Dinner" and three mysterious men who are looking for something equally mysterious. I won't reveal the secret, except to say that their mission is one thing in the second act and another in the third, and that a sort of Yankee master of ceremonies appears before the curtain after the second act and explains that that act was fiction and that the third act is the real thing. I will say, however, that the end of the second is terrifying enough and the end of the third satisfying. There is in addition, just to make it all more mysterious and terrifying, a homicidal maniac who is one person in the second act and a very different one in the last. But the real delight of the play is the author, Zadoc Grimes, played superbly by Howard Freeman. Mr. Freeman looks like Alexander Woollcott, talks like Alexander Woollcott and acts like Alexander Woollcott. Mr. Woollcott need no longer feel called upon to play himself in any future play written about his personality. Mr. Freeman will be more real than would be the real thing. Other excellent performances are given by Frederic Tozere, Howard St. John, Percy Kilbride, George Mathews and Janet Fox, and Antoinette Perry gives pace by her direction. Because of its humor, its suspense and its acting "Cuckoos on the Hearth" ought to run for some time. *(At the Morosco Theatre.)*

The other play of the week is also a murder, though one more completely farcical. It is "The More the Merrier," by Frank Gabrielson and Irvin Pincus, directed by Otto L. Preminger, with a setting by Stewart Chaney, and presented at the Cort Theatre. It also has to do with a lonely house, though this one is a castle owned by a great newspaper proprietor in the Colorado Rockies, and into it also come unbidden guests, including a corpse, which is moved from room to room on roller-skates in one of the most hysterically funny scenes in this or any other season. Had the whole play been as funny as this scene, or even as the whole second act, "The More the Merrier" might have been almost another "Arsenic and Old Lace." But the pace of the first and last acts is considerably slower. The audience is given time to think, and this in a farce is always unfortunate. The cast is admirable. There is Louis Hector, looking like Mr. Hearst; J. C. Nugent, who deserves a better part; Keenan Wynn, whose father now will probably begin to be proud of him; Doro Merande, funniest of middle-aged homespun wives and spinsters; Teddy Hart, whose eyes make terror hilarious; Millard Mitchell, Will Geer, G. Albert Smith. In fact everything is done to make the play a success, including Mr. Cheney's recocco set. If the first and last acts had equaled the second, there would also have been no doubt about this success. *(At the Cort Theatre.)*

GRENVILLE VERNON.

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Factual—and Some Fictional

CATHOLIC cinemagoers whose appetites were whetted in '39 by the March of Time short on the Vatican can now see the same company's hour-length *"The Story of the Vatican."* We are fortunate that March of Time saw fit to make this second film because it includes, besides several scenes from the short, many sequences that were photographed and filed away when the short was made; ours would have been the loss if this excellent footage had been left on shelves. The result is now a splendid documentary on life within and around this world's smallest sovereign State. As well as the expected local color shots (many of which have not been filmed before) of the Vatican's fire department, police, Swiss Guards, gardens, art treasures, library, printing presses, offices, there are first rate views of the cardinals and other personages connected with the routine of the Papal State. But most important are the many fine scenes showing the Holy Father—at his coronation, receiving audiences, visiting the United States several years ago as Papal Delegate.

The Rt. Rev. Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen wrote and narrated the commentary that accompanies the pictures. He was a good choice for this job, for popular Monsignor Sheen not only explains the details of the scenes from first-hand knowledge (I wish even more details could have been crowded in), but he also makes clear the position of the Church in this war-confused world and emphasizes the efforts being made by Pius XII for a just and Christian peace. Non-Catholics will be interested in the beauties of the old palaces, the Sistine Chapel, St. Peter's, and in the ecclesiastical and civil life connected with Vatican City. For Catholics, the picture is inspiring as well as an educational "must."

Another documentary, which will appeal especially to those interested in a realistic picture of a people's struggle against oppression, is *"Kukan."* Centuries ago China built a great wall to keep out invaders. Today the Chinese have fortified themselves with a greater wall—an indomitable spirit of courage that is resisting the ravages of a merciless foe. "Kukan" was photographed in effective color by Rey Scott as he made the difficult journey from Hong Kong up into the Northwest of China and then back again to Chungking. Mr. Scott recites his own lively commentary. What his somewhat amateurish pictures lack in cinematic polish (they were taken under most trying conditions) they make up for in authenticity and the feeling throughout that this is the real thing. Again and again is asked what is the secret of China's resistance? And the pictures themselves reiterate the answers with simple scenes showing some of China's inexhaustible manpower in action; her people working in the fields; her men and women rebuilding China's life line, the Burma Road, immediately after each Japanese bombing; the work under Madame Kai-shek to care for youngsters left homeless by every raid; the courage of the students who have dedicated their lives to free China; the return of many tribes who have realized the need for a united China; the determination of a people to survive against all odds. Then after Mr. Scott has won your sympathy for these brave, peace-loving people, he shows you awesome pictures of the bombing of Chungking. Yes, Senator Nye, this is propaganda—this is propaganda against the unwarranted Japanese invasion, but even stronger argument against war. For the innocent suffer. Depressing as "Kukan" is at times, its total effect is one of magnificent fortitude. Most of all, the Japanese should see this film of unconquerable China.

No one really expects acting to be another of Billy Conn's accomplishments, so no one is really surprised when the young fighter grins rather sheepishly in his first movie and recites his lines like a playful schoolboy at elocution lessons. Director Jack Townley saw to it that Conn's speeches were cut down as much as possible and still made some sense. Someone should have seen to it that the screenplay, vaguely based on an Octavus Roy Cohen story, was pared down to a minimum too. The trite script is made so obvious that a child of six can understand it. After Conn's good showing against Louis, you're in there pulling for him and would like to see him get a good break if he's going to be in pictures at all. In this case pretty Jean Parker manages *"The Pittsburgh Kid"* so that he won't fall into the clutches of a cold blooded manager who will put Billy into too many fights and let him wind up as a slugnutty stumblebum. It almost looks as if blonde, big-eyed Veda Ann Borg is going to take the Kid from under Jean's nose, but everything comes out as you knew it would in the first reel. In the meantime you see some of the best fight pictures that ever turned up in a feature film. Too bad that there couldn't have been more of Conn the fighter and less of Conn the actor.

If you like those cheerful, hardboiled murder mysteries, you'll probably like *"Dressed to Kill."* There is nothing pretentious or tricky about it; but Lloyd Nolan as Michael Shayne, a private investigator, and William Demarest as D. A.'s usual wise-stupid detective are fun to watch in action. Eugene Ford's direction won't hold you breathless, but he unfolds the plot slowly and with enough thrills to keep you interested and guessing. The solution is not too easy or too dumb to make you annoyed for staying to the finish of this entertaining whodunit.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

End of Summer

AS EVERYONE including Assayer expected, A. J. Cronin's "The Keys of the Kingdom" (COMMONWEAL, August 1; Little Brown, $2.50) was far and away the leading fiction best seller in August according to the report just issued in the *Publisher's Weekly*. Discussion of the book seems to revolve about two pivots. On the literary side there are its virtues as a rousing good story as against its shortcomings from a technical point of view. For my money, the good-story addicts have a little better of the argument, at least in so far as "the China Incident" is concerned. That major portion of the book manages to sustain reader interest all the way through. The second controversy dilates around the orthodoxy of Father Chisholm's theology; some bumptious defenders of the Faith, always on the lookout for anti-Catholic plots, have gone

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so far as to charge that it is in fact an anti-Catholic book. Father Chisholm does make two or three remarks in the direction of vague, hazy tolerance which leave a good deal to be desired as theological statements, but it is hardly fair to seize upon them to characterize either the heroic missionary or the book. His influence on the haughty Sister Superior sent out to his mission from Europe and the warm encouragement of his first bishop are distinctly Catholic in feeling. In fact, the priest's whole life is somewhat of a sermon in the most orthodox sense. There is one unhappy detail which few, if any reviewers, appear to have noticed. When an aged Protestant missionary is dying as a result of the tortures to which he and his wife and Father Chisholm have been subjected, he cannot forbear in his very last moments revealing with a gleam of triumph that the girl who had made possible their escape had done so for a bribe rather than out of gratitude for her upbringing in the Catholic mission. This does seem like a rather petty note on which to die. Of course, it is a mistake to expect lessons in theology or literary perfections in popular writing of this kind. I should say the influence of "The Keys of the Kingdom" is all to the good.

"This Above All," by Eric Knight (COMMONWEAL, June 27; Harper, $2.50) continues high on the best seller list. It is, as I have pointed out before, a hard-boiled account of human demoralization and human courage, with emphasis on the former. It was really neat the way the editors of the *Reader's Digest* managed to excise all the sordid elements of the love affair which comprises the plot of this story of present-day Britain when they condensed it for publication in their September issue. They managed to shift the emphasis considerably.

The most consistent best seller on the list is the third most popular for August, James Hilton's "Random Harvest" (COMMONWEAL, February 28; Little Brown, $2.50). In a way it is surprising that the sales of this book have held up so well ever since publication date. It must mean that a lot of American readers have perseverance, for it is only in the second half that the story wakes up and then it does provide a really stirring love story. Perhaps it is the combination of the author's name, the scene laid in Britain, the background of war, etc.

The *mise-en-scène* of Helen MacInnes's "Above Suspicion" (COMMONWEAL, August 8; Little Brown, $2.50) is also Britain at war. Here it is the courage and the initiative of a young married couple who go to Germany on a dangerous errand right in the midst of the conflict that makes the book so timely. Its success is also due to the ease and pace with which Miss MacInnes unfolds her spy story. It is a highly successful first novel from many points of view. Possibly there is something in "Mr. and Mrs. Cugat," by Isabel Scott Rorick (COMMONWEAL, May 23; Houghton Mifflin, $2.00), which I failed to get. It is fairly amusing and has the perennially interesting subject of the ups and downs of early married life, but I can't see for the life of me how such a slight performance should succeed in being a best seller for seven months.

The first newcomer on the fiction list is "The Sun Is My Undoing," by Marguerite Steen (Viking, $3.00). It is one of those endless performances of the Anthony

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Adverse type, 1,176 closely packed pages, which might easily have been told in much less space. It starts out in Bristol, England, and deals at great length with the horrors of the slave trade, the degeneracy of the life on the Gold Coast of Africa in the late eighteenth century, the atmosphere of Havana and the Spaniards there, lay and religious. It goes on and on, after reaching Spain itself, ends up in Bristol, where it started. Miss Steen has the gift of telling a story well if you have the patience, and the adventure runs the gamut of human types and human experiences from the finest to the most sordid. For adults who like this sort of thing it does provide a long, long prescription for getting away from the present. And one of the longest flights from reality is the way Miss Steen repeats and repeats that the Catholic Church does not allow marriages between people of different races, even stating on one or two occasions that mulattoes were denied access to the Sacraments. On the whole, though, for one of those continuing family chronicles, it is a solid work. But why did the author stop on page 1,176?

"The Captain from Connecticut," by C. S. Forester (COMMONWEAL, August 29; Little Brown, $2.50), continues to be a popular swashbuckling romance which to my taste is a better prescription for escapism if only for its comparative brevity than "The Sun Is My Undoing." It is, of course, a much lesser work.

The three that complete the fiction list widely vary in scope. "They Came to a River," by Allis McKay (COMMONWEAL, June 27; Macmillan, $2.75), is a warm reminiscence of a woman's life in the Columbia River country in the past century. "Blind Man's House" (COMMONWEAL, September 12; Doubleday, $2.50) is the last novel of the prolific Hugh Walpole. It is a study of the effect of blindness in the married life of a middle aged veteran of the last war and his young second wife. "What Makes Sammy Run?", by Budd Schulberg (COMMONWEAL, June 6; Random House, $2.50), is a tough shocker about an East Side newspaper-script writer on the make. In spots it is about as frank and unpleasant as they come and the conversation is punctuated with profanity. Withal a convincingly devastating picture of a mean character determined to succeed at any cost.

Non-Fiction

William L. Shirer's "Berlin Diary" (COMMONWEAL, August 1; Knopf, $3) continues to head the best seller list in this field. For those who like a recapitulation of the history of the past eight years as propelled from Berlin, it is hard to beat. It is highly impressionistic, incisively brief and distinctly personal. With the limitations of this type of approach to the subject, it is a competent job. Quite in contrast in my opinion is "You Can't Do Business with Hitler," by Douglas Miller (COMMONWEAL, August 29; Little Brown, $1.50), a violent diatribe by a former American commercial attaché in Berlin. Since the publication of his book, Mr. Miller has been turning out articles by the peck for a wide range of publications. If his style were more objective, his contentions would have been more convincing to this reader, although it is hard to dispute the truth emphasized in his title. Following this in popularity is Alice Duer Miller's "The White Cliffs" (COMMONWEAL, June 27; Coward-McCann, $1), that narrative poem of the two wars and England, which is the steadiest best-seller of the whole list. A newcomer is "Low Man on a Totem Pole," by H. Allen Smith (Doubleday, $2), a sort of autobiographical series of interviews, first published last spring. It all depends whether you chime in with the author's brand of humor. For my taste it is a bit too Broadway, and at times far too broad. In general in the field of humor allowances should be made for the widest range of tastes, and this would furnish anyone with a number of audible laughs. Alice Duer Miller bobs up again with "I Have Loved England" (COMMONWEAL, August 29; Putnam, $2.75), a charming picture book. On one page is a soft half-tone of the English countryside or some historic British monument, and on the opposite page descriptive paragraphs and quotations from various English poems. Another newcomer is "Looking for Trouble," by Virginia Cowles (Harpers, $3.00), an impersonally journalistic diary that is much in line with the reminiscences brought out by so many of the author's masculine counterparts. What is remarkable is that so many front-line jaunts should be compassed by a a woman. Starting in Spain and including Finland, Prague, France, Berlin, Rome, Moscow, London, the author has not missed much. But once you have read one such, you have read all. The camaraderie of these correspondents under fire evidently extends to the publishing arena as well, for "Looking for Trouble" comes forward with the accolade of a good half-dozen friendly companions at alarms. Not all of them seem to be mentioned in Miss Cowles's rather laconic pages, either. Possibly the clue is that she writes about looking for shooting in front-line trenches as the most natural thing in the world. She also appears all through to be a genuine American democrat. The collection of Churchill speeches, "Blood, Sweat and Tears" (COMMONWEAL, June 27; Putnam, $3), covers the period from May 5, 1938 to the end of 1940. "I Was a Nazi Flyer," by Gottfried Leske (Dial, $2.50), is not much of an addition to the list. Possibly the hope was to show how limited were the workings of a mind that had come up through the training of the Goering Luftwaffe—therefore, its very starkness. But I think the average reader is piqued by the title and hopes to find out a great deal about nazi plans and a great deal more about the outlook of the nazi aviators than he will find in this book. What there is does seem authentic. "Out of the Night," by Jan Valtin (COMMONWEAL, March 28; Alliance, $3.50), the exciting autobiography of a German communist, continues to sell well. So too does "Lanterns on the Levee," by William A. Percy (COMMONWEAL, May 30; Knopf, $3), a discussion of problems on our own Mississippi.

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Books of the Week

A Pair of Novels

The Young and the Immortal. Isabel Currier. Knopf. $2.50.

THERE have always been people who, through inner or outer circumstance, have found it difficult to remain within the body of the Catholic Church. Born Catholic, they have no quarrel with dogma and indeed have a better understanding of the Church than most others. It is simply that through a bad marriage, despair over the venality of the Church's organization or for some other cause they find themselves in a twilight world where they are neither in nor out of the Church. If they are to escape from this Limbo, it takes considerable grace, a strong will, and an unusually intelligent and subtle confessor—or his equivalent.

It is about such a person that Isabel Currier has fashioned an exceptionally fine first novel. Mentally precocious, Gretchen MacArthur was the problem child of the Canadian convent school which she attended. She never won the prize for philosophy because the other nuns rejected her teacher's recommendation on the ground it would be a bad example to the rest of the school. When she asked questions about the Index, she brought about her own dismissal from the school and the disciplining of that remarkable nun, Catherine of Siena.

Gretchen marries an ex-seminarian. The qualities which caused Kevin O'Callaghan to be dismissed from the seminary were also the qualities which prevented his being a good husband. He was emotionally unstable, sexually unsure. He takes to drinking and becomes preoccupied with theoretical violence and his own purple verse. He is a pitiful man without humor, and I think Miss Currier does him something less than justice in failing to more than hint at the possible causes of his instability.

Gretchen has never taken kindly to authority, and her separation from her husband is complicated by confessor's misunderstanding her and by her own intellectual pride. The process of rationalization which goes on in the mind of such a person does not lend itself to condensation. Sufficient to say that Miss Currier has handled Gretchen with distinction and out of a deep psychological knowledge.

Gretchen progresses through adultery to celibacy to a terrible depression of the spirit and finally to a happy marriage and motherhood, affording Miss Currier an opportunity to say a number of pertinent things about birth control, the new freedom, the new psychology and racial intolerance. That the book is laid in the twenties and thirties does not make it date, in spite of the number of ideas, current then, which are discarded now. It has its flaws. It is too long, the style limps at times, there is very occasional sentimentality *à la* women's magazines.

But it is a brave and honest book, free of the fearful mawkishness which has marked Catholic imaginative writing in this country. It is not too much to say that of its kind—and it is a good time—the book is the best yet done by an American.

HARRY SYLVESTER.

The Fortunate Lady. Frank Swinnerton. Doubleday. $2.50.

LATE VICTORIANISM revives in this novel of Frank Swinnerton's, not only because the characters live at the tired close of the last century, but because the

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BOOK PUBLISHERS RECOMMEND

PRAY FOR A TOMORROW. By Anne Parrish. "Limpid and undeniable as a poem by Blake, simple as daily bread, a parable as timely as it is timeless. Deeply affecting . . . a most rare beauty."—*N. Y. Herald Tribune.* By the author of THE PERENNIAL BACHELOR. (Harper). $2.50

SALUD! *A South American Journal.* By Margaret Culkin Banning. "As lively and informative an introduction to South America as has yet appeared." *Philadelphia Inquirer.* Illustrated. (Harper). $2.50

GREY EMINENCE. By Aldous Huxley. The first biography by one of our greatest living men of letters, the story of Father Joseph, collaborator of Richelieu, who forged one of the most important links in the chain of our disastrous destiny. (Harper). $3.50

THE SUN SHALL GREET THEM. By David Rame. *The Great Novel of Dunkirk!* "It is the author's own story in background, in actuality, in Doré-like realism. But it is his story transmuted through art so that it becomes the story of all the men who by gigantic, intensive effort worked what seemed to be a miracle . . . the result of human endeavor at its greatest."—*New York Times.* (Macmillan). $2.50

THE LONG WINTER ENDS. By Newton George Thomas. The heart-warming and inspiriting story of a man's courageous search for security in a strange new land, America. Here, presented more effectively, perhaps, than ever before is the American way of life and all that it comes to mean to an immigrant. Its simplicity, good-will, beauty of style will delight readers of HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY. (Macmillan). $2.75

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF ERIC GILL. "Gill's sculpture may endure or it may be shattered by the missiles of war. His autobiography must endure because it has integrity."—*N. Y. Sun.* "The quintessence of the lifework of a rare genius."—Michael Williams. Thirty-six illustrations by the author. (Devin-Adair). $3.50

THE RELIGIONS OF DEMOCRACY. *Judaism, Catholicism and Protestantism in Creed and Life.* By Louis Finkelstein, J. Elliot Ross and William Adams Brown. Sponsored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews. "I know of no better summary of the three major faiths."—Michael Williams. A best seller in Catholic bookstores. (Book Service Dept., THE COMMONWEAL) $2.00

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temper of the narrative, a pessimistic realism akin to Gissing's, gives it the very form and pressure of the age. The style, however, is more reminiscent at times of the prose rhythms of Dickens although it has none of his exuberance and courageous cheerfulness. Swinnerton's book is never wholly free from sadness. It is a sombre study of spiritual starvation, of thwarted wills, of moral disintegration. "The family in the big house by the sea was watching its own decline with trepidant fatalism. . . . Death . . . The air was full of the smell of death." The sensuality of the gay, self-indulgent Austin adds to the mounting horror as much as the wild malice of Elizabeth Mund or her unhappy and tormented sister Hester and their parents, all goading each other to deeper frustrations and evil. Against this lurid background, the stories of Catherine Mund and Lucien Oldbury are told in separate parallel installments until at last, united, "having long battled to their great cost with Fortune, they had at last exhausted her spite." Although better able than those near to them "to endure discipline or reason or suffering," they too are victims of their capacity for self-deception and their blindness to the real nature of those whose destinies are in part shaping their own. Thus they become the unwitting source of further misery. The horror only faintly suggested at the start increases in violence to a climax where Roderick Mund and his three daughters re-enact the tragedy of Lear. But the wheel of the goddess comes full circle and with it the tranquillity for Lucien and Catherine—"the fortunate lady"—foreshadowed in the opening pages.

In contrast to many of the slight and superficial novels gracing the best-seller lists, this work of a deeply reflective intelligence and an unmistakable virtuosity will not readily be forgotten by readers discriminating enough to weigh its merits.

LUCILE HARRINGTON.

BIOGRAPHY

Anthony Wayne. Harry Emerson Wildes. Harcourt, Brace. $3.75.

IN THE POSTOFFICE of Wayne, Pennsylvania, a new mural decoration glorifies Anthony Wayne. The artist, Alfred D. Crimi, portrays his subject in three distinct activities of his career—as gentleman farmer, surveyor and soldier. Each section of the composition seems inspired by dynamic imagination, a characteristic of Wayne. Harry Emerson Wildes has written a dashing biography of Anthony Wayne, and he too has caught the quality of active imagination that endeared Wayne to his contemporaries. Written with vigorous impartiality of judgment, noticeable in Mr. Wildes's previous historical work, this book maintains, even adds to, Wayne's reputation as a hero. It is not an apotheosis of unhistorical heroics. The book is not heavy with a weight of military detail. To prove his thesis that Wayne was the trouble shooter of the American Revolution, the author marshals facts that demonstrate Wayne's dramatic use of surprise strategy, a mode of warfare linking this military genius of an older era to modern strategic technique. Narrative skill of vigor and clarity tells the history of Wayne's campaigns—the failure of the Canadian invasion in 1776, the courageous heroism of the revolutionary ones in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Georgia, and beyond these, the Ohio Campaign of 1792-1795. This last, fourteen years after Yorktown, opened the Northwest Territory. Mr. Wildes gives more attention and expert understanding to these years than any former biographer.

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The superlative justification of this new life is its use, for the first time, of hundreds of letters and private papers still in the possession of the Wayne family. As a result, Mr. Wildes has penned a series of portraits of Anthony Wayne—at home, in society, in politics, as a land speculator, in war. Wayne and his times are vividly alive. Mr. Wildes leaves us in ignorance of no phase of his career. What is written of Wayne in the preface may be applied to the author of this biography: "It is a striking testimony to his warmth of personality and to his force of character." At the end of the volume, notes, bibliography and index are complete, sufficient to satisfy anyone whose only interest is in the minutiae of learning.

DANIEL S. RANKIN.

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL PROBLEMS

What Is Democracy? Charles E. Merriam. Democracy in American Life. Avery Craven. Chicago. $1.00 *each.*

EVEN IN LOVE there is a law of diminishing utility. But now that the country we love seems threatened, we grow anxious about our past neglect. So a spate of books is given us to rationalize what we call democracy.

Professor Merriam is acutely aware that the elusive thing we call Democracy has been attacked from Right and Left *because* it stands in the way of impatience. On the political level it is the last force that appeals to reason. He notes that both fascism and communism, where these ideas hold power, continue to refer to the interest and will of the people—"because the symbolisms of democracy, the attitudes of popular welfare are by this time so deeply impressed on the modern mind that they cannot be safely challenged even by those who hold in their hands weapons that seem to be irresistible for the moment." He believes that to feel that democracy is doomed is to be ignorant of history. He is convinced that this, alone in all of history, is the time when man is most nearly master of his destiny.

Both Mr. Merriam and Mr. Craven agree on the need for what Harold Laski has called "affirmative government." They agree, too, that democracy must be a "planned" way of life. But Mr. Craven is almost dispassionately concerned with the history of the democratic dogma in the United States. He always remembers that he is an historian, and not a Chautauqua preacher. Hence he does a very unusual thing. He writes no essay in lyrical incantation but an exciting, sophisticated (in the sense that it is free from mythology) and brilliant little book.

Mr. Craven shows us the origins of democracy in America, and traces its evolution with detachment, compression and skill. He is aware—as all historians are—that it is the product of ideas and interests "evolving and involving in time." And that, as often as not, the advance towards democracy in the United States has reflected interests rather than ideals. He discovers to us that as early as the eighteen thirties democracy "had become bread." He reminds us that with advancing industrialism is meant freedom—freedom to exploit, freedom to lift the few above the many. "It had produced America's first real aristocracy. Slums and share-croppers and class hatred had become a normal part of American national life."

This is a book, then, revealing a mind extraordinarily realistic and amazingly honest. Those who have been following the essays of our American historians through the year 1941 know that the temptation to escape these requirements has been great. I wonder if men will feel free to write books like this in the summer of 1942.

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REASONABLE RATES

The Inner Forum

OCTOBER this year will witness several important conferences of nationwide interest and importance. The 19th annual meeting of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference will take place October 4 to 8 at Jefferson City, Mo. Its general theme is: "What Helps Rural Life Helps the Church and Nation." Topics on Leaders Day include the Living Parish, Population Trends, Cooperatives, Settlement on the Land, Rural Education and Rural Youth. Discussion Day will be given over to the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Business Enterprise in the Future, Rural Life Philosophy in Elementary School and a study of three model communities, one of them founded by Monsignor Ligutti at Granger, Iowa. Farmers Day will take up biodynamics, conservation, the productive home, rural recreation, quality production, FSA, AAA, etc. The final day will be entirely "of the Youth, by the Youth and for the Youth," even the speakers.

The Liturgical Week 1941 will be held October 6-10 at St. Paul, Minn. The theme there is: "The Living Parish—one in worship, charity and action." At the Missa Recitata the first morning and the Missa Cantata the second morning there will be a sermon by a member of the hierarchy; a Benedictine Abbot will deliver the sermon at the Missa Solemnis the third morning, while Archbishop Murray will preach at the Missa Pontificalis on October 10. At the general meetings, morning, afternoon and evening, papers will be presented on a wide range of related topics including the Mass, the priesthood, the parish, the sacraments, liturgical art and music, the family, the social problem and Christian peace. The Masses will be celebrated in the St. Paul Cathedral; the meetings will take place at the nearby Catholic Youth Center.

Houston, Texas, is the scene of the 27th annual National Conference of Catholic Charities, October 19-22. One of its chief aims is to encourage the organization and development of this work in the American Southwest. Held conjointly is the annual conference of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, the members of which have the opportunity to attend the Catholic Charities sessions. At the business meetings of the Vincentians special attention will be given to new work with the USO and camps of the armed forces, and to forming new conferences.

CONTRIBUTORS

William M. AGAR, formerly headmaster of the Newman School, is at present dividing his time between teaching at Columbia University and working for the Fight for Freedom Committee. He is a contributing editor of THE COMMONWEAL.

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Rev. John LA FARGE, S. J., is an associate editor of *America* and is first vice president of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, which is holding its annual meeting early this month.

Christopher HOLLIS is an English writer, at present a director of Burns, Oates and Washbourne, London. He has written a great number of books, among them, "The Breakdown of Money."

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